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A DEFENSE AND INTERPRETATION OF THE NINTH BOOK OF WOLFRAM'S PARZIVAL.

THE word of an authority on his subject commands respect, yet assent too readily given may thwart the pursuit of truth. An illustration of the latter tendency will be attempted on the following pages. Gotthold Bötticher, by his important contributions, *Wolfram-Litteratur*, *Das Hohelied vom Rittersum*, etc., has sufficiently established himself as an authority on the subject of Wolfram von Eschenbach. But he has also, in one instance, blundered very seriously. In an appendix to *Das Hohelied vom Rittersum* there is contained an attack upon the ninth book of Wolfram's *Parzival*, consisting of a brief analysis of the book and a few dogmatic sentences utterly condemning it. The matter is disposed of without debate, the impression conveyed being that argument would be wasted in a case so clear.¹

Excepting the brief rejoinder of San Marte,² this view of Bötticher stood unchallenged for fourteen years. In 1900 A. Nolte, who in his doctor dissertation had already displayed an irreverent disregard of authority by daring to revise the old and propose a new interpretation of the battle-ridden "Eingang des Parzival," undertook to say a word in defense of the ninth book of *Parzival*. "Die Composition der Trevrizentscenen" is the title of this able article.³ Nolte laid bare the motive for Bötticher's unsparing attack on Wolfram's work. That motive was to overcome San Marte's view of the importance of the theological materials in Wolfram's works. San Marte would make of *Parzival* primarily a religious poem, replete with allegorical and mystical wisdom. In his campaign against San Marte Bötticher thought it essential to attack him in what appeared to be his stronghold, viz., the ninth book, where the hermit Trevrizent explains the

¹ GOTTHOLD BÖTTICHER, *Das Hohelied vom Rittersum, eine Beleuchtung des Parzival nach Wolframs eigenen Andeutungen* (Berlin, 1886), Excurs: "Die Composition des IX. Buches," pp. 81-6.

² *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, Vol. XXI, p. 240.

³ *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 241-8.

mysteries of the Holy Grail and brings back the knight Parzival to faith in the guidance of Providence.

Bötticher attempted, therefore, to discredit the literary value of the ninth book, to prove, if possible, that Wolfram was there by no means at his best, that the problem before the poet had been a magnificent one, but that his execution was very faulty. Nolte answers a number of Bötticher's objections, and in his analysis gives a much fairer estimate of the book. Yet Nolte is likewise beset by a theory. It grows out of his earlier work on the "Eingang des Parzival." The keynote of Wolfram's poem to him is *diu triuwe* ("fidelity"), in opposition to that which Bötticher calls the central idea, viz.: *unverzaget mannes muot* ("undaunted manhood," or "manly spirit"). Bötticher replied in "Noch einmal das neunte Buch des Parzival,"¹ and there successfully defends his conception of what is the underlying idea of the whole poem. That idea can be expressed in a single phrase, viz.: "Das Hohelied vom Rittertum," the triumphal song of knighthood; not the triumphal song of fidelity, "das Hohelied der Treue," as Nolte would have us believe. The ideal in *Parzival* is *unverzaget mannes muot*—undaunted manhood, not unrestrained, but tempered with the Christian virtues of humility and charity. It is not my object to take issue with this position, but rather to acknowledge gratefully to Bötticher a debt for his rational, realistic, and adequate interpretation of the poem. Where Bötticher has been unfair, misled no doubt by polemical zeal, has been in the treatment of the ninth book. Having had the last word, he remains in possession of the field. But, in spite of his ardent warfare, he has proved nothing against the ninth book, and has shown himself less able to comprehend its depth and beauty than his discomfited antagonist San Marte. What remains to be done is to approach the ninth book of *Parzival* without any theories to advocate, and in a spirit of fairness attempt to estimate its literary value.

Bötticher's numerous objections to Wolfram's ninth book can be grouped under three heads: (1) faults of composition (Fehler der Composition); (2) incoherence, or frequent ruptures in the

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XLV (1901), pp. 149-52.

train of thought (Zerrissenheit des Gedankengangs, störende Unterbrechungen); (3) lack of motivation (keine Motivierung).

Under the first head, "faulty composition," Bötticher claims that Parzival's conversion and regeneration being the purpose of the action, there is no even progress toward the consummation of that end. In order to understand the poet's intention, it will be necessary to put before our minds a clear picture of the two principal characters: the knight Parzival and his confessor Trevrizent. In the sixth book Parzival had reached the height of his fame. Victor in every warlike encounter, protector of offended womanhood, paragon of all knightly virtues, he was received into membership of the Round Table. But while King Arthur's most distinguished guest there came the killing frost. Cundrie declared him unworthy of association with Arthur's knights, because he had failed to ask the question which would have changed suffering to happiness at the Grail court. The curse of Cundrie affects Parzival deeply, and yet he cannot altogether blame himself. Has he not obeyed implicitly the teaching of the courtly Gurnemanz? An innocent man, he receives terrible punishment. The Divine Helper ought to protect his faithful vassals against such disgrace. Parzival has a sympathetic heart; he is moved to pity for the sufferings of Anfortas, which he might have relieved. He is also ambitious, and regrets the loss of the kingship of the Holy Grail. These two motives impel in him the desire to win back what he has lost, whatever sacrifices it may require. Anfortas will have cause to be thankful to him. As for the Helper who refuses help and allows the flower of knighthood, through no fault of his own, to become the scorn of his fellows, all bonds with Him shall henceforth be broken:

"wê waz ist got?
wær der gewaldec, sölhen spot
het er uns pēden niht gegeben,
kunde got mit kreften lebn.
ich was im diens undertān,
sît ich genāden mich versan.
nu wil i'm dienst widersagn:
hāt er haz, den wil ich tragn."

—332, 1-8.

In this attitude of mind Parzival appears before Trevrizent—Trevrizent, once a fearless knight himself, now a hermit living in self-chastisement for the sins of his family and of the world, a trifle garrulous, the result of his years and wide experience, but of a broad and deep humanity that will understand and withal pardon the sins of the individual that are induced upon him by the lusts of the age.

As soon as Trevrizent discovers the pride and rebellion in Parzival's soul it becomes his object to prove to him that an individual may, in spite of the best of intentions to the contrary, offend against moral law; that he may even conform to the moral standards of his age, and still become guilty of transgressions against a higher law. Such, for instance, has been Parzival's life of adventure and battle, fully in accordance with the ambitions and standards of the age. Yet what misfortune did it bring to others—death to Ither, death to his mother, and murder unpunished, such as follows in the train of the modern duel! Yet worldly honor and human pride made Parzival blind to his fault. What method does Trevrizent employ to open his eyes? Does he explain to him from beginning to end the chapter of his sinfulness? Does he pronounce to him the infallible dogmas of the church? Some such method would have been preferred by Bötticher, for he misses "*eine gründliche Erörterung der Schuld.*" Trevrizent's method is this: He does not assume an air of superiority, but seeks Parzival's level, having explained that he too was once a knight wooing adventure and woman's love. He forces Parzival to realize to the fullest extent the evil consequences of his actions, not blaming him so much as the evil ambitions of the world. Parzival begins to see, himself, the shame and guilt of his mode of life, and, instead of being told, he himself tells wherein he has done wrong. There are two separate confessions of Parzival: the first, in which he explains his despair of divine help; and the second, in which he discloses that he visited the Holy Grail court; these are the climaxes (*Höhepunkte*) in the action of the ninth book. The process of extracting these confessions from the proud heart of Parzival in a manner most natural and lifelike serves to exalt the character of Trevrizent, and gives proof of the hand of a literary master.

The first confession is prepared for by about 150 lines, in which Trevrizent quickly gains Parzival's regard and gratitude through his courteous reception and kind provision for his personal wants. The hermitage and its shrine revive in Parzival the memory of his oath that re-established the conjugal happiness of Jeshuta and Orilus; the remembrance of a spear that he took away becomes the means of informing him how many years he had wandered about seeking conflict and despairing of God's help.

Sprach Parzival. "mirst freude ein troum :
ich trage der riwe swæren soum.
hêrre, ich tuon iu mêr noch kuont.
swâ kirchen ode mûnster stuont,
dâ man gotes êre sprach,
kein ouge mich dâ nie gesach
sît den selben ziten :
ichn suochte niht wan striten.
ouch trage ich hazzes vil gein gote:"

—461, 1-9.

He then explains that hatred fully. Such passionate discords had never broken the stillness of the sanctuary. The host sighs and gazes at his guest. With calmness and dignity he explains to the knight the nature of God :

"sîn helfe ist immer unverzagt."—462, 10.
"got heizt und ist diu wârheit."—462, 25.
"irn megt im ab erzûrnen niht."—463, 1.

He speaks also in symbolical language, explains a parable, exalts Christian doctrines; to all of which Parzival listens attentively, and at last thanks the expounder :

"hêrre, ich bin des immer frô,
daz ir mich von dem bescheiden hât,
der nihtes ungelônnet lât,
der missewende noch der tugent."

—467, 12-15.

But he concludes his confession thus: "I have gained sorrow for fidelity in my young life up to this very day." Now the confessor is ready with questions to get to the root of Parzival's sorrow. The knight replies that there are two causes: (1) absence from his wife, and (2) longing for the Grail. Trevrizent praises

the knight for his devotion to his wife, but laughs at him for the second cause of his grief. Only the predestined can reach the Grail. "I know it and have seen it," says Trevrizent. With sudden interest Parzival asks: "Were you there?" He had almost forgotten himself and said: "Were you there *also*?" Trevrizent, not knowing what goes on in Parzival's mind, now gives a complete explanation of the mysteries of the Grail. The glories of the Grail inspire Parzival with even greater zeal for the quest. He makes a naïve protest against predestination: "If knighthood can achieve the body's renown and the soul's paradise, then I have not been lacking. If God is a judge of the art of combat, let him elect me, a knight who will not flinch" (472, 1-10). It is not strange that the confessor rebukes the self-conscious warrior for his pride, one of the seven deadly sins. Yet it is done in a kindly manner: "Your youth may easily mislead you into breaking modesty's virtue. Lucifer fell through pride, and so did Anfortas. Humility ever gained the victory over pride."

Now follows a passage, 473:4—475:12, in which Trevrizent rambles somewhat, a passage to which Bötticher particularly objects. If we examine closely, however, we can detect the poet's purpose. Up to this point Trevrizent does not know who the knight before him is. He would like to know; his personal interest in him has grown. Not wishing at once to ask the question, he beats about the bush, speaks first of an unnamed young knight, lacking in wit, who came to the Grail, presumably not the man before him; might he be Lâhelin, who robbed a Grail knight of a horse such as the guest rides? "Are you Lâhelin?" asks the hermit. Parzival's disclosure of his identity changes their whole relation. Before this the hermit has spoken to Parzival with sympathy and kindness, to be sure, but so would he have done to any stranger who appealed to him for confession. He has spoken to his unknown guest about the nature of God, about the mysteries of the Holy Grail, about the sin of pride. He has spoken earnestly, yet not without a certain courteous reserve. Now the fact is suddenly revealed that his sister's son stands before him. The barriers of reserve are broken down between them. There is a distinct advance in the action of the scene. Trevrizent's sympathy

yields to tender concern, his reserve leaves him, and he rouses Parzival's dormant conscience. He lays before him the enormity of his crime in killing Ither, the perfect knight and his own blood; furthermore, he charges him with causing the death of his mother, Herzeloide. "She could not endure the separation from him." One of the strong traits of Parzival is his love of his mother. The revelation staggers him. He did not know she was dead, he will not believe it.

"neinâ hêrre guoter,
waz sagt ir nu?" sprach Parzival.
"wær' ich dan hêrre übern grâl,
der möhte mich ergetzen niht
des mærs mir iwer munt vergiht.
bin ich iwer swester kint,
sô tuot als die mit triwen sint,
und sagt mir sunder wankes vār,
sint disiu maere beidiu wār?"

—476, 14–22.

The lordship of the Grail would not repay him for such a loss. Trevrizent will not conceal the truth from him: "Thou wert the dragon of her dream, that sucked at her breasts and speedily flew away."

Trevrizent now abruptly changes the subject of conversation; he speaks of his and Herzeloide's other relatives, Sigune, Repanse de Schoye, and finally Anfortas. Bötticher cannot understand the reason of this turn. It is done to relieve the awful tension of emotion produced in Parzival. What better could he do than speak of the living, when the dead cannot be restored to life?

Before his nephew Parzival, Trevrizent has no longer anything to conceal concerning Anfortas, whose history he now tells—his knightly achievements, then his fall, and now his sufferings. The latter are described with minute detail, as well as the remedies applied, exhausting the medical knowledge and fancies of the mediæval age. Trevrizent hopes to win Parzival's sympathy. Unwittingly he does much more. Parzival begins to realize the magnitude of his sin of omission. By a single question he might have done more for his suffering mother's brother than the prized adder's poison, the waters from the four rivers of Paradise, the

blood of the pelican, the heart of the unicorn. Trevrizent does not know that Parzival has been at the Grail court and is suffering under the curse of Cundrie. Not knowing what additional pain he is giving his hearer, he now relates the incident of the young knight, who, unnamed by the Grail, was predestined to appear at the court. If he would ask the fateful question, he should become king of the Grail, and the suffering of Anfortas should cease; if he would not ask the question the first night, its power should cease. No one durst prompt him what to do, under penalties of greater suffering to the king. The young fool had done better to have stayed away, says Trevrizent. He lost a great opportunity, and he was punished severely enough.

What a masterstroke of the literary art, to make the kind old hermit, *der guote man*, as he is so frequently called, as it were, an avenging spirit, scourging the open wound of his victim. If he had known what he was doing he would surely not have applied the lash so fiercely. The young knight, bereft of his wits, who had appeared at the Grail, stood before him, yet so overcome by shame and consciousness of his guilt that he could not find the courage to declare his identity. Both men were silent now; "sie bēde wārn mit herzen klage" (485, 1).

The host suggests going for food. It is near midday, and the horse must be cared for. The host provides good cheer with the frugal meal of fruits and herbs. This episode is thoroughly appreciated by Bötticher: "das erste für die Composition wertvolle Zwischenstück." One feels that the narrative has made a deep impression on Parzival. "Ein vorzügliches Stimmungsbild erschütterten Selbstbewusstseins, und eines sich entwickelnden herzlichen Vertrauens des Jüngeren zum Älteren."

After the meal and the near companionship that it has brought, Parzival musters courage for the confession that he could not utter before. He does it in manly fashion, without attempting to mitigate, without a vestige of that pride that once pleaded his innocence while making confession:

" hêrre und lieber oheim mîn, ...
 ich hân sô sêre missetân,
 welt ir michs engelten lân,

sô scheide ich von dem trôste
 unt bin der unerlôste
 immer mêr von riuwe.
 ir sult mit râtes triuwe
 klagen mine tumpheit.
 der ûf Munsalvæsche reit,
 unt der den rehten kumber sach,
 unt der deheine vrâge sprach,
 daz bin ich unsælec barn :
 sus hân ich, hêrre, missevarn."

—488, 4, 9-20.

This confession, the second which Parzival makes, is the one wrung deepest from his heart ; it is the one he would most willingly have concealed. It undoubtedly marks the highest point in the action of the book.

Trevrizent does not hide his surprise and sorrow ; but he will not refuse counsel. Parzival should in right measure sorrow and cease sorrowing. Mankind is queerly constituted. Oft youth pretends to be wise, and age practices folly. But if Parzival will be of manly heart and despair in God no more, he can yet reap a reward that will cause him to forget all his past trials. Of that Trevrizent will stand his surety. At this point Bötticher expects a thorough explanation of Parzival's guilt and a clear depiction of his regeneration, "eine gründliche Erörterung und Klarstellung der eigentlichen Schuld, sowie eine deutliche Entwicklung seiner inneren Wandlung." In answer to Bötticher's second consideration it can be maintained that the change has taken place step by step before our eyes. Should we in justice expect from the mediæval poet a naturalistic analysis such as would tickle the modern literary palate? Parzival has learned the lesson expressed in the words of the evangelist and repeated in the Lutheran service : "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-10). Though never expressed in these words, Trevrizent has most forcibly impressed this doctrine on Parzival's mind and thereby brought about the knight's regeneration.

Bötticher's other point, his demand of a thorough ventilation

of Parzival's actual guilt, requires a somewhat longer treatment. In the first place, we must bear in mind that the poet's office is to construct living men, not abstractions nor embodied syllogisms. Let us return to the scene which the poet portrays, to the hermit and the knight. Trevrizent is in a peculiar position. The revelation that Parzival was the young knight who failed to ask the question came as suddenly upon him as the news of the death of his mother to Parzival. Trevrizent recalls instantly all that he has said about that unhappy mortal, how severely he has blamed him for his brutal stupidity, how he has magnified the sin. All at once the culprit stands before him. Shall he raise the scourge again? In the experience of man with man, of teacher and pupil, there is a point where punishment should cease if it be not meant to crush. Realizing the delicacy of his task of uplifting the remorseful yet high-spirited offender, the hermit has now mainly words of consolation and of hope. Presently his words wander off to other subjects. He talks of things that to us might seem trivial—not so, however, to the mediæval mind—about the mysterious influence of the stars—a hobby of Trevrizent; about the rites of the Grail court not before explained. By a question he induces Parzival to relate his experiences at the Grail castle. Trevrizent follows with the tale of his own life, which brings to him the red knight Ither, whom Parzival slew, and that reminds him again of Parzival's sins. The confessor names two great sins for which the knight shall make atonement: the killing of Ither, and the responsibility for the death of his mother. Why, asks Bötticher, does not Trevrizent name at once the third sin, which should be regarded as the greatest, viz.: the failure to ask the question at the Grail court? This third sin is named thirty-five lines farther on in the text and is ranked as the equal of the others. The following explanation can be offered: The first two are sins of commission, and therefore should be spoken of together; the last is one of omission. Trevrizent intends to name it, but thinks he can find another lurking sin of commission, theft of a Grail horse, possibly *rêroup*, robbery of a slain foe. But Parzival successfully defends himself against that charge. He himself provokes the naming of the third sin, by asking a question about the maidenly bearer of

the Grail. Says Trevrizent in reply: "The maid gave you the mantle for the same reason that Anfortas gave you a sword. She hoped you might become their king. But your mouth, capable enough of speech, refused to utter the question. Let this sin stand beside the others." Then Trevrizent closes abruptly with: "wir suln ouch tälanc ruowen gën," "Let us go to rest" (501, 6). That offends the scholar's sense of justice. All along he had been waiting in vain for the "gründliche Erörterung und Aufklärung der eigentlichen Schuld," and now Trevrizent is going to bed! The wise hermit judges that enough has been said, and he leaves time to do the rest: "sus was er dâ fünfzechen tage" (501, 11).

The question is interesting, Which of the sins of Parzival is the greatest? Trevrizent dwells longest on the killing of Ither, Parzival's blood-relation, the mourned of knights and ladies, and undoubtedly considers this first-named the greatest sin; for, while the omission of the question was a sinful act, a mitigating circumstance was Parzival's "tumpheit," "his senses refused their service;" and, moreover, had he not already suffered severely for it? Was it not a terrible thing to behold the greatest glory known to mortal man attainable and yet elude your grasp? To Parzival himself the death of his mother caused the greatest pain, since he was responsible; it seemed to him his greatest sin, and all the splendor of kingship of the Holy Grail could not reimburse him for his loss. To the reader undoubtedly Parzival's failure as regards the fateful question appears his greatest sin. Though young and trained in the inadequate school of worldly propriety, the hero should have possessed the initiative, the intelligent sympathy, to find the right course of action. We see that the relative importance of Parzival's sins depends entirely upon the point of view. Why should we object to the order in which Trevrizent names them? He is the speaker and gives his view of the case; his opinion need not influence the reader, nor is it necessarily the same as the opinion of Wolfram von Eschenbach.

We learn that Parzival remained in the hermitage thereafter for fifteen days. Herbs and roots were his food; but he gladly bore all the trials, because of the sweet peace that entered his heart through the host's pardon and his knightly counsel.

The close of the book meets the approval neither of Bötticher nor of Nolte. The latter says: "Auch der Schluss [beginning 499, 11] hätte straffer und kräftiger herausgearbeitet werden können." As long as we are not told how that might have been done, we shall have to confine ourselves to the poem as it exists. The close proper of the poem includes the lines 501, 19—502, 30 (forty-two lines). The attempt is made to produce a lifelike scene. We have just been told of the fifteen days of atonement. One day, the poet says, Parzival inquired about the aged Titurel, whom he had seen on his visit to the Gralsburg. It is an inquiry such that we may imagine many had gone before on various days, showing us that Parzival is no longer the self-centered individual that he once was, but that he has learned the habit of asking questions. The inquiry is answered, and we learn a moment later that this same day is the last which Parzival spends with the hermit. The parting is brief; a caution is given to protect women and the priesthood. The latter are to be his guides. Then the hermit spoke:

" gip mir dîn sünde her:
 vor gote ich bin dîn wandels wer.
 und leist als ich dir hân gesagt:
 belîp des willen unverzagt."
 von ein ander schieden sie:
 ob ir welt, sô prüevet wie.

—502, 25-30.

For what goes on in their hearts at parting the poet appeals to the imagination of the reader. The close is certainly not lacking in dignity, in taste, in suggestiveness, even in brevity.

Under the head of faulty composition may be included the criticism of Bötticher, that of the two themes—(1) Parzival's regeneration or return to faith, and (2) the mysteries of the Holy Grail—the latter, though the less important one, gradually assumes the more important place. Let us examine whether this be in accordance with the facts. By an actual count of the lines belonging to each theme, beginning where Bötticher begins his analysis, 452, 13, I get the following results:

	Theme.	Lines.	Lines.
1.	Parzival's return to faith (<i>Umkehr</i>) - - -		732
	Including: 456, 5—468, 22 - - -	378	
	471, 30—473, 4 - - -	34	
	474, 25—477, 30 - - -	96	
	485, 1—489, 21 - - -	141	
	499, 11—500, 22 - - -	42	
	501, 5—501, 18 - - -	14	
	502, 4—502, 30 - - -	27	
2.	The Grail mysteries - - -		627
	Including: 453, 11—455, 22 - - -	72	
	468, 23—471, 29 - - -	97	
	473, 5—474, 24 - - -	50	
	478, 1—483, 18 - - -	168	
	483, 19—484, 30 - - -	42	
	489, 22—495, 12 - - -	171	
	500, 23—501, 4 - - -	12	
	501, 19—502, 3 - - -	15	
	Belonging to neither theme—		
3.	Episodes - - -		158
	Introductory lines { 452, 13—453, 10 - - -	28	
	{ 455, 23—456, 4 - - -	12	
	Trevrizent's story 495, 13—499, 10 - - -	118	

From this table it appears that the number of lines devoted to the first theme exceeds by more than a hundred the number of the Grail theme. The lines of the latter, moreover, have been estimated very liberally. Some of them, e. g., 478, 1—483, 18 (168 lines), the description of the sufferings of Anfortas, and 483, 19—484, 30 (42 lines), Trevrizent's story of the useless visit at the Grail of the young knight without wit, belong just as much to the first or main theme, because their effect is to stir Parzival to sympathy and remorse, to lower his pride, and advance him toward regeneration. Another section, counted as a part of the Grail theme, 453, 11—455, 22 (72 lines), describes Wolfram's sources, Kyot, Flegetanis, etc., and has but very slight connection with the Grail. If these three sections were deducted, there would be left to the Grail theme but 345 lines, as compared with the 732 lines of the main theme.

Moreover, it is not in accordance with the facts to claim that

the Grail theme is gradually given more prominence until it overshadows the principal theme. This can be seen by consulting the numbers above. The last 228 lines of the ninth book consist first of Trevrizent's story concerning himself (118 lines). These, if classed with either, must go with the main theme, since the effect is to bring the knight and hermit closer together. The remaining lines are made up of 27 in all belonging to the Grail theme, and 83 to the main one.

As a distinct motif competing for supremacy with the other, the mystery of the Grail closes with line 471, 29, where the words occur:

hêr, sus stêt ez umben grâl.

It is the fulfilment of the promise in 452, 29, 30:

an dem ervert nu Parzivâl
diu verholnen mære umben grâl.

What follows about the Grail blends or unites with the main theme in bringing about Parzival's regeneration, as has been explained in the preceding pages. The second serious defect with which Bötticher charges the ninth book is what he would call: Incoherence, and disturbing interruptions in the train of thought. Illustrations of this are the following:

1. Reference to Kyot and other sources, 453, 1—455, 22. It must be remembered that the Middle High German court poets took pains to avoid the impression of originality. Herein Wolfram is true to existing traditions.

2. The genealogies mentioned in 455, 13 f., are characterized as "ein ungeschicktes Vorgreifen." Wolfram's purpose here seems to be to tell us that Kyot was the one who discovered the connection between the Grail kings and the house of Anjou.

3. The riddle of the virgin earth, and the added praise of virginity, 463, 24—464, 30. This should be regarded, not as a defect, but as a characteristic of Wolfram's style. Wolfram were not himself if he did not propose riddles or use symbols or phrases of hidden meaning. In the *Wartburgkrieg* he figures as past-master at riddles. Characteristic also is his mystic account of the neutral angels, 471, 15—30.

4. The passage, 473, 5—477, 30, has been treated above. Nolte shows that there is throughout a close association of ideas: “diese Gedanken sollen eben in ihrer psychologischen nicht logischen Verkettung die Ideenassociation darstellen, welche Trevrizent zu der in der Entwicklung des Gesprächs nunmehr notwendig gewordenen Frage führt: ‘wer er sei.’”

5. Trevrizent's narrative of his own adventures, 495, 13—499, 10. Aside from the comments already made, it can be urged that these lines tend to complete our picture of the hermit, to individualize him; and that this is a worthy object, even if it be attended by a slight retardation in the progress of the main theme.

A third serious fault that Bötticher discovers in the ninth book is a lack of motivation. Alleged instances of this have already been noted above. Others are:

1. Parzival's inquiry, whether Trevrizent did not fear him as he appeared armed before the hermitage. (457, 22–24.) It occurs in the following way: Parzival, clad in full armor, had met a group of pilgrims, the gray knight and his followers, who were on their way to the hermit's hut. The gray knight rebuked Parzival for his martial array on the day of Christian mourning. Parzival had to be told, for he had lost all reckoning, that the present day was the most solemn church festival of the year, viz.: Good Friday. Parzival felt shame, and refused to accompany the train of pilgrims, accoutred as he was. Not long after he arrived before the hermit, and feeling how much his armor and warlike appearance were out of place, his question means: “Were you not frightened by my threatening aspect on a day when everyone else wears the garb of a pilgrim?” His appearance is quite as astonishing and lacking in civility as that of Orlando as he rushed with drawn sword upon the peaceful diners in the forest of Arden.¹

2. Bötticher objects to what seems a beginning of the story of Anfortas at various times, and an interruption without a reason that he can detect. An attempt has already been made above to explain this. The first mention has occurred 455, 13 f., where he is named to honor Kyot. The second time, 472, 21–30, Anfortas is held up to Parzival as an example of the ruin that

¹ *As You Like It*, Act II, scene 7.

comes from pride and arrogance. The last reference is the full account, after Trevrizent knows that the knight before him is his own nephew, from whom he need withhold nothing. (477, 19 f.)

In his school edition¹ Bötticher has omitted the first two references to Anfortas, viz., 455, 13 f., and 472, 21–30; but the editor and translator should not be taken to task for the number of his omissions, since he is producing an abridged *Parzival* for the use of the secondary schools. But he does not stop there; he occasionally adds a line as a connecting link, and rearranges sections according to his ideas of improvement of the original; for example on p. 197, where 499, 18–29 has been inserted after 476, 30. A justification for such highhanded censorship Bötticher thinks unnecessary. “Einer besonderen Rechtfertigung bedarf es hoffentlich nicht” (“Vorrede,” p. vii.) Bötticher’s version of the ninth book is undoubtedly a logical piece of composition, but the life of the original and the subtle play of emotion between hermit and knight are lost entirely.

The following analysis, suggested by similar outlines by Bötticher and Nolte, will recapitulate what has been said on the preceding pages. The section 433, 1—452, 13 has not been included in the earlier analyses just mentioned. It should be regarded nevertheless as the fitting prelude to the Trevrizent scenes. Both episodes included in the section—Sigune in the lonely forest cloister, and the Good Friday pilgrims led by the gray knight—strike the deep chord that vibrates throughout the whole of the ninth book. This portion of the epic resounds, not with the noisy din of battle or the merry thrill of festivity, but with the solemn note of worship, of remorse, and atonement. These episodes likewise yield a view of *Parzival*’s state of mind before he comes to Trevrizent. In the first instance he is not greatly moved by Sigune’s sorrow, he is too self-centered and thinks more of his own troubles:

“ich solte trûrn umb dine klage,
wan daz ich hœhern kumber trage
danne ie man getrüege.
mîn nôt ist zungefüege.”

—442, 5–8.

¹ *Parzival von Wolfram von Eschenbach*, in neuer Übertragung für alle Freunde deutscher Dichtung erläutert und zum Gebrauche an höheren Lehranstalten eingerichtet: von DR. GOTTHOLD BÖTTICHER (Berlin, 1885).

Again, when he gives his horse the reins to seek the way, in his proud heart he is giving the Lord one last chance to help him, 452, 1-12.

I proceed to an

ANALYSIS OF BOOK IX.

I. INTRODUCTION (433, 1-455, 22).

- 433, 1-434, 30. Parzival's adventures since leaving Arthur's court.
 435, 1-442, 26. Sigune in the forest cloister and Parzival.
 442, 27-451, 2. Meeting with the gray knight and his party.
 451, 3-455, 24. P. gives reins to his horse and goes in the direction of the hermitage. Digression concerning sources.

II. EXPOSITION OF CHARACTER OF HERMIT AND KNIGHT.

- 455, 25-460, 27. Arrival and reception of P.

III. RISE OF ACTION (460, 28-487, 30).

- 460, 28-461, 26. Stage 1: First confession of P.
 461, 27-467, 10. Stage 2: T. instructs P. in the nature of God.
 467, 11-468, 22. Stage 3: T. finds root of P.'s dissatisfaction; longing (1) for Grail, (2) for his wife. T.'s praise for (2) and ridicule of (1), since only predestined win Grail.
 468, 23-471, 29. Stage 4: Description of the Grail mysteries. (The Grail motif ends.)
 471, 30-473, 4. Stage 5: Parzival's presumptuous desire to be elected. T. on the dangers of pride. Examples.
 473, 5-474, 24. Stage 6: T. attempts to find out who the knight before him is.
 474, 25-484, 30. Stage 7: On discovery that P. is nephew of T., the relation changes. T. overthrows P.'s self-consciousness by direct appeal to his conscience. Charges him with murder (1) of Ither, (2) of his mother. Effect on P. T. speaks of the living, of the life and sufferings of Anfortas. Not knowing that P. has visited the Grail, T. speaks of the "tumber" who ruined his chance at the Grail. Silence of P.
 485, 1-487, 30. Stage 8: Frugal meal at the hermitage preparing P.'s second confession.

IV. CLIMAX.

488, 1—489, 21. P.'s second confession. T.'s consolation.

V. DECLINE OF ACTION, AND CLOSE (489, 22—502, 30).

- 489, 22—491, 18. Additional explanations: spear, knives, the fisherman. (Effect: to relieve P.'s suffering, and uplift him.)
 491, 19—495, 12. P. tells his experiences at the Grail court, suggesting more questions to T.
 495, 13—499, 10. T. tells the story of his life.
 499, 11—501, 6. T. sums up P.'s sins.
 501, 7—501, 18. Period of atonement, fifteen days.
 501, 19—502, 30. Last day. P. continues to show interest, asking about Titurel. T.'s counsel to guard priests and women. T. absolves P. from his sins. The parting.

It appears from the foregoing that there are not only definite and continuous stages of progress in the action of the Trevrizent scenes, but that there is dramatic power in the method of construction. The conclusion is forced upon us that the ninth book of Wolfram's *Parzival* is a literary masterpiece, as much in composition as in thought and expression. Naturally, when viewing its symbolism and mysticism, we must be mindful of the taste and bias of the age in which the work was written. We should be as tolerant of the Grail lore and of mediæval superstition as we are of the phantasmagoria, the grotesque imagery and hocuspocus of Goethe's *Faust*.

If we compare Wolfram's ninth book with the only extant contemporary treatment of the same theme, that of Chrestien de Troyes, *Perceval le Gallois ou le Conte du Graal*, lines 7590—7892,¹ the Middle High German work cannot but rise mightily in our estimation. Chrestien gave to the subject of Parzival's regeneration 302 lines; Wolfram, 2,100. But not alone in expansiveness or thoroughness did the latter exceed his contemporary. His portraiture compares with the French model as a life-like painting in color with an outline sketch in charcoal. The most important feature in which Wolfram gains the mastery over Chrestien is in his power of motivation, that is, his ability to assign motive for

¹ *Perceval le Gallois ou le Conte du Graal*. Publié d'après les manuscrits originaux par CH. POTVIN. (Mons, 1886.)

action, and his resourcefulness in preparing every stage of it. Exactly how much credit for this belongs to Wolfram and how much is attributable to his sources remains still a mooted question. It is beyond the purpose of this paper to enter into the intricate, yet fascinating maze of the Kyot discussion, which is not without present-day champions.¹ The question may never be satisfactorily settled. But whoever wrote the epic, whether Wolfram with Chrestien alone as his model, or whether Wolfram-Kyot, in which Kyot represents the model or models which Wolfram followed very closely, the fact remains that these joint labors have produced what Alfred Nutt² has aptly called "the most interesting individual work of modern European literature prior to the *Divina Commedia*;" a literary masterpiece, moreover, which, when measured by the standards of the age in which it was written, even when measured by absolute standards, takes very high rank in the world's literature. Concerning the appreciation of this mediæval edifice, in which the ninth book from my subjective view-point appears the keystone of the arch, the same oft-quoted maxim holds which Goethe applied to all literary criticism:

Wer den Dichter will verstehen
Muss in Dichters Lande gehen.

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¹ E. g., WESSELOFSKY, *Die Erzählungen von Babilon, der Stiftshütte, und dem hl. Gral.* (Petersburg, 1896.) Cf. S. SINGER, "Über die Quellen von Wolframs Parzival," *Zeitschr. f. d. Altertum*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 321-42; JULIUS LICHTENSTEIN, "Zur Parzivalfrage," PBB., Vol. XXII, pp. 1-93.

² ALFRED NUTT, *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail* (London, 1888), p. 248.